Historical Studies in the Pattuppāṭṭu

Sankara Parvathi Endowment Lectures 1963-64

Delivered by

C. E. RAMACHANDRAN, M.A., M.LITT.,

Lecturer in Indian History, University of Madras.

(*on 25th and 26th March, 1963*)

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ABBREVIATIONS

1.	Aham	: Ahanānūru
2.	Kurinji	: Kurinjippāṭṭu
3.	Madurai	: Maduraikkāñchi
4.	Malaipadu	: Malaipadukadām
5.	Mullai	: Mullaippāṭṭu
6.	Muruga	: Tirumurugārruppadai
7.	Nedunal	: Nedunalvādai
8.	Paṭṭinam	: Paṭṭinappālai
9.	Perumpāṇ	: Perumpāṇārruppadai
10.	Porunar	: Porunarārruppadai
11.	Puram	: Puranānūru
12.	Silambu	: Silappadikāram
13.	Sirupāṇ	: Sirupāṇārruppadai
14.	Tol Porul	: Tolkāppiam Poruḷadikāram
15,	Tol. Sel	: Tolkāppiam Solladikāram

KEY TO DIACRITICAL MARKS

அ — a	எ — e
ஆ — ā	ஏ — ē
இ — i	ஐ — ai
ஈ — ī	ஒ — o
உ — u	ஓ — ō
ஊ — ū	ஔ — au
க் — k	ம் — m
ங் — ṅ	ய் — y
ச் — ch	ர் — r
ஞ் — ñ	ல் — l
ட் — ṭ	வ் — v
ண் — ṇ	ழ் — l
த் — t	ள் — ḷ
ந் — n	ற் — ṟ
ப் — p	ன் — ṉ

I. INTRODUCTION

The early history of the Tamils is gleaned from the Sangam literature so called as they were presented before an Academy of Poets, called the Sangam and accepted as standard works. Scholars such as P. T. Srinivāsa Iyengār,[1] and K. N. Sivarāja Pillay[2] doubted the existence of such an academy of poets, on the ground that the word Sangam is not to be seen anywhere in the Sangam literature, and went to the extent of remarking that "the idea of an organised Academy is a very modern one". But Saint Appar's reference to the Sangam[3] and Āndāl's reference to Sangattamiḻ[4] prove beyond doubt the existence of the Sangam and the production of a collection of Tamil literature called afterwards Sangattamiḻ. It can be said that the Sangam was known by other names such as Avai, or Kūdal, in the Sangam period and that the sanskrit term Sangam came to be applied to it, somewhere about the fifth century A.D., when the liberal use of sanskrit expressions became common, in the Tamil country.

There has been a great deal of controversy over the fixation of the age of the Sangam. Tradition says that there existed three Tamil Sangams, and that they lasted for a total period of about 10,000 years.[5]. If this traditional account is accepted then the beginnings of the Sangam, should be assigned to about 10,000 B. C. As it is known, that the system of writing was invented only about

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1. History of the Tamils — P. T. Srinivāsa Iyengār, p. 233.
2. Chronology of the Early Tamils — K. N. Sivarāja Pillay, p. 18.
3. Tirupputtūr Tiruttāṇdagam St. 3.
4. Tiruppāvai: 20.
5. Commentary on Iraiyaṉār Ahapporuḷ.

4,000 B.C., it will be incredible to say that the Sangam began its existence about 10,000 B.C. Then ignoring such imaginary figures furnished by the commentary on the Iṟaiyaṉār Ahapporuḷ, one should try to arrive at a reasonable chronology of the Age of the Sangam. Mr. P. T. Sriṉivāsa Iyeṅgār has remarked "the earliest Tamil odes we now have represent a comparatively late stage of literary development. Their language is not the spoken language of the common man, but a strictly refined, conventionalised one. These early odes obey strict metrical rules and what is much more remarkable, exhibit a highly complicated scheme of literary convention."[6] This implies an earlier period when linguistic investigations and speculations were rife and when grammatical works were produced. In the Puṟanāṉūṟu, poem 2 refers to the wearing of the Thumbai flower, while fighting. This can be taken as an indication to show that there were well established literary conventions, before the time of the composition of the poems of the Puṟanāṉūṟu. The five-fold classification of the country and the five-fold aspect of love seen in the Aham works indicate that such conventions had already been settled before the extant Sangam works were produced. The use of grammatical terms such as Uyartiṇai[7], in the Sangam works and reference to nūl[8] in the sense of a technical treatise in the extant Sangam works are sufficient to prove the existence of grammatical works before the production of the extant Sangam works. These grammatical treatises in turn imply a considerable amount of literature upon which may be based rules and conventions. Mr. P. T. Sriṉivāsa Iyeṅgār has remarked "possibly the earliest songs were in the unrefined dialects actually spoken; but they have all died just as have perished the early sanskrit ballads."[9] There can be no doubt that the Sangam epoch should have been spread over a number of centuries and in view of this K. R. Sriṉivāsa Iyeṅgār's suggestion that 500 B. C. can be the starting point of the age of the Sangam,[10] seems reasonable.

But the discovery of short Brahmi inscriptions in Tamil and the assignment of the inscriptions to the 2nd, or the 3rd century B.C. has led to the view that Tamil could not have been a well developed language about 500 B.C. Prof. Nīlakaṇta Sastri has said that "the

6. P. T. Sriṉivāsa Iyeṅgār's History of the Tamils, p. 150.
7. Kuruntogai, 224.
8. Nedunalvādai, l. 76; Maduraikkāñchi, l. 646, Siṟupāṇārṟuppadai l. 230.
9. P. T. S. — History of the Tamils, p. 149.
10. History and Culture of the Indian People, Vol. II. Ed. R. C. Majumdar, p. 293.

script was alphabetic, and already included signs of the peculiarly Dravidian sounds like ṟ, ē, ḷ, and ṉ. He adds that, "there is no doubt that these peculiarities were the result of a pretty long process of trial and error."[11] Professor Sastri evidently thinks that the Tamil alphabet would have been used if it had been developed by that time. But he seems to base his conclusion on these short inscriptions which only give the names of persons who made the cavern fit for habitation, or, of the monks who occupied them thereafter. He himself admits that these inscriptions from the caverns have not been fully elucidated.[12] One of these inscriptions shows that a cavern was donated by one Polālaiyaṉ, a Kutumpikaṉ, or an householder, from Ceylon. Some of these caverns are called Samaṇar Kudagu or caves of the Jains. Then it is clear that these caverns were used by the ascetics, Jains as well as, Buddhists and were donated by foreigners, such as the one from Ceylon. These inscriptions which are seen in these caverns should have been those of the Jains and Buddhists, who came from North India and were accustomed to the use of Brahmi script. They could have used the Tamil language as the inscriptions were made in the Tamil country. The language that these northeners used could not have been chaste Tamil and on the basis of this if it is said that Tamil was in its formative stage in the 3rd century B.C., the hypothesis cannot be established. The very absence of inscriptions in Tamil other than these would lead one to think that the natives of the Tamil country did not make any such inscriptions. Inscriptions should have come into vogue only when the Jains and Buddhists from the north came to the Tamil country and not before. It follows from this that the short Brahmi inscriptions, not fully elucidated yet, cannot be shown as evidence to show that Tamil was in its formative stage in the 3rd century B.C. As at least 500 years would have required for Tamil literature to attain the standard of the extant Tamil clalssics, 500 B.C. could be taken as the starting point of the Sangam epoch. The absence of any reference in the Sangam literature to the Pallavas who became prominent at the close of the sixth century A.D. and Appar s reference to the Sangam in the past tense in the middle of the 7th century A.D., postively places the Sangam to a period well before the 6th century A.D. and so 500 A.D. could be taken as the closing date of the Sangam.

The extant Sangam works according to the commentary on Iṟaiyaṉār Ahapporuḷ belonged to the Third Sangam. The period

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11. Comprehensive History of India, Vol. II, p. 501.
12. Ibid., p. 500.

of the third Sangam can be roughly taken to be the first three centuries of the Christian era, on the basis of the synchronism of Senguṭṭuvan and Gajabāhu I of Ceylon. The discovery of Roman coins of the reign of Augustus and the excavations at Arikāmēdu and descriptions of foreign trade in the Sangam classics prove beyond doubt that the first three centuries of the Christian era was the age of the extant Sangam works, of which the Pattuppāṭṭu is one.

The Sangam literature consists of the Pattuppāṭṭu or the ten Idylls, the Eṭṭutokai and the Padineṇkiḻkaṇakku. Among the three groups mentioned above Pattuppāṭṭu is given precedence[13] and this implies that the ancient Tamils considered it superior in some way, or other to the other collections mentioned along with it. The Pattuppāṭṭu comprises of the following works.

1.	Tirumurugāṟṟuppadai	— Madurai Kaṇkkāyaṉār Makaṉār Nakkīrar
2.	Porunarāṟṟuppadai	— Mudattāma Kaṇṇiyār
3.	Siṟupāṇāṟṟuppadai	— Idaikaḻi Nāṭṭu Nallūr Nattattaṉār
4.	Perumpāṇāṟṟuppadai	— Kadiyalūr Uruttiraṉ Kaṇṇaṉar
5.	Mullaippaṭṭu	— Kāvirippūmpaṭṭinattu Poṉvaṇigaṉār Makaṉār Nappūdaṉār
6.	Maduraikkāñchi	— Māṅgudi Marutaṉār
7.	Nedunalvādai	— Madurai Kaṇkkāyaṉār Makaṉār Nakkīrar
8.	Kurinjippāṭṭu	— Kapilar
9.	Paṭṭiṉappālai	— Kadiyalūr Uruttiraṉ Kaṇṇaṉār
10.	Malaipadukadām	— Iraṇiyamuṭṭattu *Perumkuṉṟūr Perum Kausigan*

Among the Ten Idylls Nakkīrar is the author of the Nedunalvādai and Tirumurugāṟṟuppadai. Talaiyālaṅgānattu Nedum Seḻiyan is the hero of the Nedunalvādai. The same Paṇdya is the hero of the Maduraikkañchi composed by Maṅgudi Marutanār. Nakkīrar refers to Karikāla in one of the poems of the Ahanānūṟu in such a way as to imply that Karikāla was his contemporary.[14] Muṭattāmakkaṇṇiyar's, Porunarāṟṟuppadai is on Karikāla. So Nedunalvādai, Tirumurugāṟṟuppadai, Maduraikkāñchi and Porunarāṟṟuppadai should belong to the same age.

Nakkīrar refers to Kapilar in past tense in the Ahanāṉūṟu[15] and so Kapilar's Kurinjippāṭṭu should have been produced before the

13. Tolkāppiyam Sel. Sutra 50, Perāsiriyar Commentary.
14. Aham, 141.
15. Ibid., 78.

works mentioned above. Uruttiran Kannanār's Pattinappālai is on Tirumāvaḷavan who is said to have defeated Irungōvēḷ. Irungōvēḷ was the contemporary of Kapilar[16] and so both Kapilar and Uruttiran Kannanār should have also been contemporaries. Kannanār is also the author of Perumpāṇarruppadai on Ilam Tirayan. In view of these Kurinjippāṭṭu, Paṭṭinappālai and Perumpāṇarruppadai should be the productions of the same age preceding that of the first bunch of works.

Perum Kausiganār, the author of the Malaipadukadām sang in praise of Nannan, the son of Nannan. Nannan the elder was the contemporary of Paranar[17] who was himself the contemporary of Karikāla. So Kausiganār's Malaipadukadām should be placed after the first bunch of works.

The Mullaippāṭṭu resembles the Kurinjippāṭṭu. Among the natural divisions of the Tamils, Kurinji is given the first place and Mullai the next place. In view of this it may be said that the Mullaippāṭṭu should have been produced after the Kurinjippāṭṭu. The Mullaippāṭṭu mentions the yavanās.[18] The yavanās are also mentioned by Nakkīrar in the Nedunalvādai[19] and on this account Mr. Vaiyapuri Pillai would assign the Nedunalvādai and the Mullaippāṭṭu to the same age. This conclusion of Mr. Vaiyāpuri Pillai seems to be strengthened by the Ahanānūru in which also the yavanās[20] are mentioned in a poem in which Nedum Seḻiyan's military exploit is referred to. The Mullaippāṭṭu may then be assigned to the age of Nedum-Seḻiyan and can be added to the first bunch of works.

The Sirupāṇārruppadai states that the seven Vaḷḷals have died[21] and that Nalliakkōdan has taken their place. In view of this the Sirupāṇārruppadai may be considered as the latest among the collections.

Mr. Vaiyāpuri Pillai is of the view that the Tirumurugārruppadai should have been a much later work and that its author should have been a different Nakkīrar. He points out that the Nakkīrar, who

16. Puram, 201, 202.
17. Aham, 142, 258.
18. Mullaippāṭṭu. l. 61.
19. Nedunalvadai, l. 101.
20. Aham, 149.
21. Sirupāṇārruppadai, ll. 84-112.

praised the rulers and chieftains and loved earthly pleasures could not have been the same Nakkīrar who composed the Tirumuru-gārruppadai, as in this work the author completely concerns himself with God and the attainment of salvation. In addition to this difference in outlook, in the Tirumurugārruppadai certain usages do not conform to the rules of Tolkāppiyam.[22] But the argument based on difference in outlook cannot be taken as a conclusive evidence to show that the author of this work should be different from the Nakkīrar whose compositions figure in the other Sangam works. The same person is likely to change his outlook, views and thought as he grows in age and gains experience. The Nakkīrar who loved the earthly pleasures could have himself in the evening of his life concentrated his thoughts on God and the attainment of salvation. Moreover on the basis of a few differences in usages, one need not jump to the conclusion that the work should be a much later production. If at all there are any uncommon usages in Nakkīrar's work they are only few and may be taken to indicate the development of the literature since the time of Tolkāppiyam and not necessarily as that of an age, far removed from the age of the Sangam.

In the Tirumurugārruppadai the ancient practice of Veri Ādal is vividly portrayed and the mother goddesses Korravai and Paḻayōḷ are mentioned. In view of these there is no need to postulate that the Nakkīrar of the Nedunalvādai is different from the Nakkīrar of the Tirumurugārruppadai.

The above discussion would then help us to arrange the works of the Pattuppāṭṭu in the following chronological order.

I	Kurinjippāṭṭu Paṭṭinappālai Perumpāṇārruppadai	Same generation
II	Nedunalvādai Tirumurugārruppadai Maduraikkāñchi Porunarārruppadai Mullaippāṭṭu	Next generation
III	Malaipadukadām	Next generation
IV	Sirupāṇārruppadai	Latest of all the Ten Idylls.

It is generally said that Indian literature is not a trustworthy source of history, compared to the epigraphic evidence. But a care-

22. Ilakkiyadepam, pp. 29-35.

ful study and dispassionate sifting of relevent material from the miscellaneous heap at our disposal is bound to yield valuable grains of historical information, which properly used can form the basis of correct historical evaluations. The Sangam literature can be considered as a more satisfactory source of history than the Tamil literature of the later ages. This is largely due to the fact that the Sangam literature belongs to a period when the learned and the poets were not inhibited by excessively religious or didactic or any other extraneous sentiments in their poetry, and gave themselves upto a spontaneous and natural type of poetry which was by its very nature free from gross exaggeration. The naturalness and spontaneity, and the simplicity make the material in that literature very useful and dependable as a source of history.

In the Pattuppāṭṭu the poets give an account of some of the prominent political personages of the age, such as Karikāla and Nedum Seḷiyaṉ. But the information relating to social history is greater than that relating to political history. Information about the customs and manners of the people, relating to marriage, religious worship, funerary practices and about their dress, food, dwelling places, internal and external trade is furnished in the collection and will be of interest to the student of history.

II POLITICAL CONDITIONS

The Pattuppāṭṭu speaks of the three crowned Kings, the Cheras, Chōḻas and the Paṇdyas[1] and the Chieftains who ruled over different regions of the Tamil Country. As in other Sangam works nowhere there is any mention of any other dynasty.

CHOLAS

Three chōḻas are mentioned in the Pattuppāṭṭu: Viz. Tuṅkeyil Eriṉda (Toditot) Sembiyaṉ, Tirumāvalavaṉ and Karikāla. The Sembiyan who destroyed some mysterious flying fortresses is stated to have ruled from Uraiyūr, the ancient capital of the Chōḻas.[2] He was one of the ancestors of the early chōḻas and the reference to him in the past tense implies that he was not the contemporary of the author of the work Siṟupāṇāṟṟuppadai, Idai Kaḻi Nāṭṭu Nattattanār.

Tirumāvaḷavaṉ, is the chōḻa who is mentioned in the Paṭṭiṉappālai. Kadiyalūr Uruttiraṉ Kaṇṇaṉār the author of the work, Paṭṭiṉappālai gives a graphic account of his military exploits. Tirumāvaḷavaṉ was confined in prison by his enemies when he was young.[3] While in prison, he planned his escape, and taking the sword in hand he killed the guards and made good his escape, and gained the throne which was his by right and of which he was deprived of by his enemies.[4] Not content with regaining the throne he desired conquest of the neighbouring states. Leading an army consisting of mighty elephants and swift steeds he brought destruction to many a fortified and well guarded city of his enemies. In these

1. Porunar, ll. 54-55; Perumpāṇ: ll. 32-33.
2. Siṟupāṇ: ll. 81-83.
3. Paṭṭiṉam: ll. 221-222.
4. Ibid, ll. 225-227.

campaigns the numerous oliyar were subdued;[5] the Aruvāḷar were made to serve him;[6] the northerners were made to lose their splendour;[7] the people of Coorg were depressed;[8] the might of the Pāṇḍya was destroyed[9] and Iruṅgōvel along with his allies faced defeat.[10] Having won laurels in war, Tirumāvaḷavaṉ cleared the forests and reclaimed the waste lands.[11] He enabled the farmers to carry on their occupation without any break (due to the failure of the monsoons) by digging irrigational tanks.[12] Urandai or Uraiyūr which had tall gateways and towers was enlarged.[13] The temples and the ancient families in the country received protection.[14] Tirumāvaḷavaṉ, by his conquests and by his care of his subjects, deserves to be considered as a conqueror and a benefactor among the early Chōḷas.

The Porunarāṟṟuppadai speaks of Karikāla and his military exploits. Karikāla was the son of Uruvappahṟēr Ilañjēt Seṉṉi.[15] He inherited the throne even while he was in the mother's womb.[16] After his birth he shouldered the burden of administering the country[17] and as a lion's cub which in its very first attempt killed an elephant, he defeated and killed the Chera and the Paṇḍya at Veṇṇi.[18] The Ahanāṉūṟu credits Karikāla with having defeated a number of chieftains along with the Chera and the Paṇḍya[19] The name of the Chera who sustained a defeat at the hands of Karikāla at Veṇṇi is furnished by the Puṟanāṉūṟu according to which it was Perumcēralātaṉ.[20] The name of the Paṇḍya is not gleaned from the Sangam works. Mudattāma Kaṇṇiyār the authoress of the Porunarāṟṟuppadai refers to Karikāla's just and long rule.[21] and thereby indicates that he had a keen sense of justice.

5. Ibid, l. 274.
6. Ibid, l. 275.
7. Ibid, l. 276.
8. Ibid, l. 276.
9. Ibid, l. 277.
10. Ibid, l. 282.
11. Ibid, l. 283.
12. Ibid, l. 284.
13. Ibid, l. 285.
14. Ibid, l. 286.
15. Porunar, l. 130.
16. Ibid, l. 132.
17. Ibid, ll. 137-138.
18. Ibid, ll. 142-147.
19. Aham, 246.
20. *Puram*: 65.
21. Porunar, ll. 229-230.

Now there are stanzas appended to both Paṭṭinappālai and Porunarāṟṟuppadai and on the basis of these stanzas Tirumāvaḷvaṉ and Karikāla have been identified with one another. Even the commentator of the Pattuppāṭṭu, Nachchiṉārkkiṉiyar has stated that both the pieces were composed on Karikāla. Whereas the Porunarāṟṟuppadai states that Karikāla shouldered the burden of administering the country from the time he began to crawl, the Paṭṭiṉappālai mentions that Tirumāvaḷavaṉ was in the prison of his enemies and then he recovered his throne. This difference is marked and furthermore the Paṭṭiṉappālai does not refer to the famous battle of Veṇṇi in which Karikāla defeated both the Chera and Paṇdya along with a number of chieftains. It will be clear that the text of the two pieces vary widely in their account and it was Nachchiṉārkkiṉiyar who identified Karikāla of Porunarāṟṟuppadai with Tirumāvaḷavaṉ of Paṭṭiṉappālai. In view of this Karikāla and Tirumāvaḷavaṉ should be treated as different personages. In the Silappadikāram Ilaṅgō Adikaḷ mentions Karikāla at two different places and Tirumavalavan is mentioned at one place. If Tirumāvaḷavaṉ and Karikāla were one and the same Ilango Adikal would have used anyone of the names all through the work and would not have mentioned differently at different places. It is apparent that the two were different from one another and that Nachchiṉārkkiṉiyar following Adiyārkkunallar wrongly identified them.

Pandyas :

The Maduraikkāñji mentions three Paṇdyas - Nediyōn,[22] Palyāgasālai Mudukudimi Peruvaḷudi[23] and Nedum Seḻiyaṉ who won a victory at Talaiyālaṅgāṉam. Nediyōn and Mudukudimi Peruvaḷudi are referred to as the ancestors of Nedum Seḻiyaṉ. It is not known from the Maduraikkāñji whether Nediyōn was followed by Palyāgasālai Mudukudimi Peruvaḷudi or vice versa. But from a poem in he Puṟanānūṟu[24] it is evident that Nediyōṉ was the predecessor of Palyāgasālai Mudukudimi Peruvaḷudi.

The commentator, Nachchiṉārkkiṉiyar identifies Nediyōn with Vadimbalamba Niṉra Paṇdyan. He appears to be one of the earliest among the Paṇdyas. The Maduraikkāñchi credits him with a victory over the Chera and the Chōḷa and a number of chieftains.[25] He is

22 Madurai, ll. 61, 763.
23. Ibid, l 759.
24. Puṟam: 9.
25. Madurai, l. 55.

also stated to have invaded the enemy country and to have brought destruction to their lands. Unfortunately there is no means of knowing who the Chera, Chōḷa and Chieftains were and when and where the battle was fought. Professor K. A. Nilakaṇṭa Sastri considers Nediyōṉ as a mythical figure due to the general way in which he has been referred. But Nediyōn appears to have been a historical figure and one of the famous among the predecessors of Nedum Seḻiyaṉ, for in the same work in another place he is referred to as one who had attained great fame.

Palyāgasālai Mudukudimi is credited with the performance of Vedic sacrifices.[26] It is not possible to say what distance in time separated Nediyōn from Palyāgasālai Mudukudimi and the latter from Nedum Seḻiyaṉ

The text of Maduraikkāñji does not mention the name Nedum Seḻiyaṉ. Nachchinārkkiṉiyar, the commentator gives the name of the hero of the piece as Nedum Seḻiyaṉ who won a battle at Talaiyālaṅgāṉam.[27] The text of the piece mentions the battle of Talaiyālaṅgāṉam,[28] and gives the account that the Paṇdya defeated and killed the enemies. The author of the piece does not say that he fought against the two other crowned kings and the chieftains. One of the poems in the Ahanāṉūṟu gives the information that he fought against the Chōḷa and Chera, and five other Chieftains.[29] The battle of Talaiyālaṅgāṉam should have been the most eventful battle in the career of Nedum Seḻiyaṉ as he came to be known as Talaiyālaṅgāṉattu cheru veṉṟa Nedum Seḻiyaṉ. The Maduraikkāñji mentions in addition to the battle of Talaiyālaṅgāṉam, Seḻiyaṉ's victory over a people called Paradavar[30] in the extreme south and the people of Coorg.[31] Nellūr protected by the sea was captured by him,[32] and Korkai, famous for pearls and shells was included in his kingdom.[33]

The Cheras :

The Siṟupāṇāṟṟuppadai mentions Kuṭṭuvaṉ who imprinted the bow emblem on the Himalayas.[34] Kuṭṭuvaṉ is a common name

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26. Ibid, l. 759.
27. Ibid., Colophon.
28. Ibid, ll. 127-128.
29. Ibid., Aham, 36.
30. Ibid, l. 144.
31. Ibid, l. 105.
32. Ibid, ll. 87-88.
33. Ibid, ll. 135-138.
34. Siṟupāṉ, ll. 48-49.

among the Cheras and so it is not known whether it is a reference to Seṅkuṭṭuvaṉ or to any other Kuṭṭuvaṉ such as Iḷam Kuṭṭuvaṉ* or Kuṭṭuvaṉ Kōdai. The Padirruppattu credits Nedumcēralātaṉ with imprinting the bow emblem on the Himalayas.[35] The Sillappadikāram which mentions Seṅkuṭṭuvaṉ's north Indian expedition does not credit him with imprinting the bow emblem on the Himalayas.[36] The Kuṭṭuvaṉ who imprinted the bow emblem must therefore be a different Chera. If Kuṭṭuvaṉ is not taken as a personal name and is taken as a reference to one who ruled over Coorg then the Kuṭṭuvaṉ who imprinted the bow emblem could be identified with Imayavarambaṉ Nedumcēralātaṉ.

The Maduraikkāñchi mentions another Chera by name Kōdai.[37] Again Kōdai is a common name among the Cheras. In the other Sangam classics, Kōdai Mārbaṉ,[38] and Kuṭṭuvaṉ Kōdai[39] are mentioned. It is not definite whether the Kōdai of Maduraikkāñchi was Kōdai Mārban or Kuṭṭuvāṉ Kōdai. In the Ahanānūru, Nakkīrar mentions Kōdai[40] and in the same work he mentions Kōdai Mārbaṉ.[41] Since Kōdai and Kōdai Mārbaṉ are mentioned by the same poet, Nakkīrar, it may well be that Kōdai and Kōdai Mārbaṉ are one and the same. Kōdai Mārbaṉ is stated to have rejoiced when Kiḷḷivaḷavan defeated at Kūdal one Paḷaiyaṉ Māraṉ.[42] In the Maduraikkāñchi also one Paḷaiyaṉ[43] is mentioned and at another place in the same work he is referred to as Māraṉ[44] and as a vassal of Nedum Seḷiyaṉ. The text of Maduraikkāñchi makes it clear that Paḷaiyaṉ and Māraṉ were one and the same and so the Paḷaiyaṉ Māraṉ mentioned in the Ahanānūru must be the general of Nedum Seḷiyaṉ. Nakkīrar was the contemporary of Nedum Seḷiyaṉ and he should have been the contemporary of Kōdai Mārbaṉ the Chera. If Kōdai Mārbaṉ was the contemporary of Nakkīrar he should have been the contemporary of Mānkudi Marutaṉār, the author of Maduraikkāñchi also. Kōdai mentioned by him in the Maduraikkāñchi was then Kōdai Mārbaṉ and not Kuṭṭuvaṉ Kōdai. The Maduraikkāñchi

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35. Padirrupp, Patigam, 2.
36. Silambu, Cantos XXV. ll. 183-189; XXVI. ll. 251-254.
37. Madurai, l. 152.
38. Aham, 346.
39. Puram, 54.
40. Aham, 93.
41. Ibid., 346.
42. Ibid., 346.
43. Madurai, l. 508.
44. Ibid., l. 772.

mentions that in the presence of Kōdai the learned men put forward their views and carried on disputations. This reference implies that Kōdai Mārban should have been interested in such debates, himself being a learned man.

Chieftains :

In the Pattuppāṭṭu, a number of Chieftains and their acts of liberality are mentioned. Sirupāṇāṟṟuppadai mentions the seven Chieftains who attained fame by their liberality. Pēhan the lord of a mountainous tract was the head of the Āviyar tribe.[45] He is stated to have covered with his coat a pea-cock to protect it from the chill weather of the winter season.[46] Pāri another patron left his chariot on the way so that a jasmine creeper could spread on it.[47] Pāri was the lord of the Parambu mountain.[48] Kāri who wielded a spear is stated to have given all the land he owned along with horses to the bards.[49] Āy, another chieftain presented the God who dwelt under the banyan tree with the garment which he got from a serpent.[50] This reference to Āy is legendary in character. But if the garment which he presented is taken as the outer skin of a serpent, it may not be legendary. The God who dwells under the banyan tree is Lord Siva and He is said to adorn himself with serpents. Āy might have therefore thought it fit to adorn the God with the outer skin of a snake which he had secured. Adigan attained fame by presenting the poetess Auvai with a rare myrobalan fruit believed to endow the person who consumed it with immortality.[51] Naḷḷi, the Lord of the Naḷḷi mountain extended his bounteous hand to many and made them live happily.[52] Ōri, another patron also gave away the mountainous tract he owned to the minstrels as present.[53] He is stated to have fought against Kāri who rode on a horse of the same name.[54]

The author of Sirupāṇāṟṟuppadai, after listing the seven patrons who attained the title of Vaḷḷals by their liberality, extols his patron

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45. Sirupāṇ, ll. 86-87.
46. Ibid, l. 85.
47. Ibid, l. 89.
48. Ibid, l. 91.
49. Ibid, ll. 92-95.
50. Ibid, ll. 96-97.
51. Ibid, ll. 100-103.
52. Ibid, ll. 104-107.
53. Ibid, l. 109.
54. Ibid, ll. 110-111.

Nalliakkōdan. The poet states after the seven Vaḷḷals, Nalliakkōdan, all alone patronised the bards and the needy.[55] Nalliakōdan is described as the Lord of Mavilangai[56] and as the chief of the Ōviyar tribe.[57] The gates of his palace were ever kept open,[58] so that any one might at any time benefit by his liberality. His territory included Eyirppaṭṭinam[59] which must have been a port, and Vēlūr,[60] Kidangil[61] and Āmūr.[62]

Iḷam Tirayan is the hero of the Perumpāṇārruppadai. He is referred to as the descendant of the Toṇdaiyar.[63] The poet attributes a legendary pedigree to Iḷam Tirayan by referring to Tirumāl or Lord Vishnu as the founder of his line.[64] It is stated in the Perumpāṇārruppadai that in Tirayan's land there were no highway men who attacked the travellers and seized their belongings, after killing them mercilessly.[65] This reference to absence of highway robbery implies that Tirayan with a stern hand completely put down the activities of the brigands and afforded protection to the traders and travellers. Tirayan ruled from his capital Kāñchi.[66]

In the Maduraikkāñchi we come across a chieftain by name Viral Vēl. He was the Lord of Aḻumbil which was known for its fertile lands and rich crops.[67] In the same work Paḻaiyan is mentioned as the lord of Mōhūr.[68] His court was adorned by the Nānmoḻikkōsar. At another place in the same work one Māran is referred to as the chief of youthful Kōsar.[70] Māran and the youthful Kōsar are stated to have carried out the behests of the Paṇdya.[71] It follows that Māran was the general or vassal of the Paṇdya. In the Ahanānūru one Paḻaiyan Māran is stated to have met with

55. Ibid, ll. 112-115.
56. Ibid, l. 120.
57. Ibid, l. 122.
58. Ibid, l. 206.
59. Ibid, ll. 152-153.
60 Ibid, l. 173.
61. Ibid, l. 160.
62. Ibid, l 188.
63. Perumpāṇ, l 454.
64. Ibid, l. 30.
65. Ibid, ll. 39-41.
66. Ibid, l. 420.
67. Madurai, ll. 343-345.
68. Ibid, l. 508.
69. Ibid, ll. 508-509.
70. Ibid, ll. 772-773.
71. Ibid, l. 774.

defeat at Kūdal, at the hands of the Chōḻa Kiḻḻivaḻavan.[72] This Paḻaiyan Māran should have been the Māran, the general of the Paṇdya referred to above. In the Maduraikkāñchi both Paḻaiyan and Māran are associated with the Kōsar and therefore it follows that they are one and the same and that the Chieftain's full name was Paḻaiyan Māran. Nannan the son of Nannan is the hero of the Malaipadukadām.[73] In the other sangam works Nannan is referred to as the Lord of Pāḻi.[74] The hero of Malaipadukadām was perhaps the son of Nannan of Pāḻi. Nannan, son of Nannan, is described as a liberal patron of the bards.[75] He is also referred to as one who undertook the duty of patronising the bards and the needy.

Administration :

Monarchy was the usual form of Government. The rulers and the chieftains traced their ancestry either to God[76] or a famous hero.[77] Monarchy was hereditary. The Porunarāṟṟuppadai mentions that Karikāla inherited the throne even while he was in the mother's womb.[78] The King was expected to be a man of kind words.[79] He should shun the company of the unvirtuous.[80] The king's court was adorned by the members of the five groups,[81] chieftains[82] and others, who were probably consulted by the king on matters relating to the state. Adiyārkkunallār the commentator of the Silappadikāram mentions that the ministers, Brahmanas, generals, ambassadors and spies constituted the five groups.[83] In the Maduraikkāñchi there is a reference to the Kāvidis.[84] The commentator Nachchinārkkiniyar states that the Kāvidis were ministers and that Kāvidi was the title borne by them. The ministers were virtuous men free from all vices and capable of distinguishing good from evil.[85] The king was expected to be a liberal patron and help the poor and the bards.[86]

72. Aham, 346.
73. Malaipadu, l. 64.
74. Aham, 15.
75. Malaipadu, ll. 60-61.
76. Perumpāṇ, ll. 29-30.
77. Madurai, l. 41.
78. Porunar, l. 132.
79. Siṟupāṇ, l. 208.
80 Ibid, l. 207.
81. Madurai, l. 775.
82. Ibid, l. 776.
83. Silambu, Canto V, l. 157.
84. Madurai, l. 499.
85. Ibid, ll. 496-498.
86. Perumpāṇ, l. 446.

The protection of the people and the temples was one of the duties of the king.[87] The Maduraikkāñchi mentions that in one of the streets of Madura there was the court of law.[88] It is probable that in the chief towns and capitals of the Tamil country there were such courts of law.

War :

There were frequent wars between the kings and between the chieftains, the kings being helped by the chieftains at times. Nedum Seḻiyān fought against a confederacy of Kings and chieftains.[89] The Tamils maintained the traditional fourfold army.[90] Spears,[91] swords,[92] bows and arrows[93] and shields[94] were used in war as weapons. The sword was tied to the coat worn on the breast[95] possibly across the breast, or it was hung from the shoulder,[96] It was the practice to lift the cows of the enemy during night.[97] The capitals of the Kings were protected by high walls with small towers[98] from which spears and arrows were sent on the enemy. There were deep ditches[99] surrounding the walls and in the ditches there were fearful creatures such as the crocodile.[100] Beyond the ditch there used to be a thickly wooded forest.[101] In such forests were stationed the Vēṭṭuvar who dwelt in small forts.[102] The enemy therefore in the first instance came into conflict with those Vēṭṭuvar It was the practice to destroy their small structures and pitch the camp protected by thorny shrub.[103] In the midst of this camp the king's tent would be located.[104] The tent consisted of both inner and outer apartments.[105] The outer apartment was guarded by ladies[106] armed with swords and trusted

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87. Paṭṭiṇam, l. 286.
88. Madurai, l. 492.
89. Ibid, l. 55.
90. Ibid, ll. 47, 49, 51, 53.
91. Kurinji, l. 129.
92. Nedunal, l. 182.
93. Perumpāṇ, l. 82.
94 Ibid, l. 120.
95. Ibid, l. 71.
96. Nedunal, l. 182.
97. Madurai, ll. 140-141.
98. Ibid, ll. 66-67.
99. Ibid, l. 64.
100. Malaipadu, l. 90.
101. Madurai, l. 64.
102. Mullai, l. 26.
103. Ibid, ll. 26-28.
104. Ibid, l. 44.
105. Ibid, l. 64.
106. Ibid, ll. 46-47.

body guards.[107] In the inner apartment were employed the yavanās who communicated with the king through actions.[108] The commentator states that they were dumb yavanās. On the other hand it may be taken that the yavanās who spoke a different language, communicated through action and not by speech. In war much destruction was wrought to the enemy country. The enemy country was set on fire,[109] and the people were made to flee from their lands.[110] If the enemy submitted, tribute[111] was accepted and then possibly the enemy country was spared of the destruction. While the battle was fought the conch and the trumpet were sounded.[112] The victorious war drum of the enemy was seized.[113] The destruction brought about during times of war, which was quite frequent, should have seriously affected agriculture and industry and must have been the cause for renewal of war and retaliation by the defeated party. Sometimes war was averted by the mediation of wisemen.[114]

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107. Ibid, l. 54.
108. Ibid, l. 66.
109. Madurai, l. 126.
110. Paṭṭiṉam l. 239.
111. Madurai, l. 230.
112. Ibid, l. 185.
113. Ibid, l. 129.
114. Kurinji, l. 28.

III SOCIAL CONDITIONS

The social organisation of the Tamil Country, in the Sangam Age differed from society in other parts of India. By the time of the Sangam Age, the Tamil Country had developed a high culture. We cannot say definitely when exactly this culture began to develop and how it grew up to the level it had attained in the Sangam Age. The Sangam literature makes it clear that the contact with the north had developed long before the age of the literature. Though Aryan influence is discernible and the blend of Aryan and non-Aryan cultures is clear, yet the persistence and continuance of the Pre-Aryan customs, practices and ideas is distinct. The caste system of the Aryan north has no parallel in the Tamil Country of the Sangam Age. There were divisions in society based on occupations and therefore they may well be designated as occupational groups, rather than castes. In the Tamil Country social divisions were based on occupations which had close relationship with the natural divisions of the land. The Tamils divided the land into five natural regions[1] the Kurinji, or the mountainous terrain, Mullai, or the forest region, Marudam, or the fertile plain, Pālai the dry land and Neydal, the coastal region.

The chief occupation of the Kurinji region was hunting. The people of this region were called as Kāṉavar,[2] or Kuṟavar.[3] The Kāṉavar used to keep watch over the tiṉai field and drive the elephants which enter the field to eat the ripe well grown tiṉai crop,

1. Tol. Porul, Sut. 5 and 11.
2. Kurinji, ll. 225-226.
3. Malaipadu, l. 333.

by hurling at them stones.[4] In the forest area called Mullai the people were mostly cowherds and they were known as Kōvalar.[5] They always carried with them a stick which they used to drive the cattle and also to pluck the leaves from the trees, in order to feed the cattle.[6] The shepherdess woke up early in the morning, separated the butter from the curd by churning it, and sold the butter-milk in the neighbouring town[7]. The people of the fertile cultivable tract, the Marudum took to agriculture and were called the Uḻavar.[8] The Uḻavar used the bull to plough the lands,[9] and irrigated their lands by drawing water from the wells.[10] The people of the littoral region caught fish in the deep sea and the rivers and they were called the Paradavar.[11] In fishing they used both nets[12] and the line.[13] In the dry arid land, comparable to the desert, the people who lived there could carry on no other occupation, but highway robbery on those who dared to pass through that region, on various errands and this class of highwaymen were termed as the Eyiṉar[14] or Kaduṅkaṇ Kāṉavar.[15] It was their practice to go into the forest in the night and sit hidden, inside pits dug for getting water during summer, and hunt the wild pigs that enter the pits in quest of water.[16]. During day time they used to spread nets along the fences and hunt the rabbits with the help of the hounds.[17] They also employed an easy method to hunt animals. Pits would be dug and their openings would be covered so that the animals that pass by might fall into them.[18] The Eyiṉar used to attack and plunder the neighbourhood at the sound of the sweet drum, in groups.[19] With the help of a long pole which served as a ladder they also used to destroy the honey-comb and get honey.[20]

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4. Ibid, ll. 203-205.
5. Nedunal, ll. 3-4.
6. Mullai, l. 15.
7. Perumpāṇ, ll. 156-162.
8. Ibid, l. 197.
9. Ibid, l. 198.
10. Madurai, ll. 91-92.
11. Porunar, l. 218.
12. Madurai, l. 256.
13. Paṭṭiṇam, l. 80.
14. Ibid, l. 266.
15. Perumpāṇ, l. 116.
16. Ibid, ll. 110-111.
17. Ibid, ll. 112-116.
18. Madurai, ll. 294-295.
19. Paṭṭiṇam, ll. 265-266.
20. Malaipadu, ll. 315-316.

Along with these clases, the Brahmanas found a place in the Tamil society. They are referred to as the twice born[21] and as those who recited the Vedas.[22] They wore the sacred thread which comprised of three bunches of three threads each.[23] The Brahmanas must have come from the north and should have gained a place in the Tamil society. There were ascetics among the Brahmanas and they dressed themselves in saffron coloured garments and carried with them the tridaṇda or Mukkōl.[24]

Marriage :

The parents of a maid after deep consideration chose the bridegroom, as at present. The parents of the bride would in the first instance satisfy themselves whether the bridegroom came of a good family, or not. Then they would consider whether the bridegroom's family occupied the same status in society and whether there could be cordiality between the two families. The bridegroom's character and associations were enquired into by the parents of the bride, and they would then consider whether he was a proper match for their daughter. Having looked into these factors and having come to a conclusion that the marriage between the two would result in a happy married life the parents would give their consent for the marriage.[25]

But the Tamil society afforded opportunities for the lad and the lass to meet each other, and fall in love with one another. It was the custom of the people of the Kurinji region to send their daughters to the field where the tiṉai crop was ripening, for the purpose of scaring away the parrots and other birds from eating the corn.[26] It was then that the meeting between the maid and the youth who came there accidentally took place and they fell in love. The maid was detained in the house after the harvest was over and so she could not meet her lover and became lovesick. This would make her appear sunken and sullen. The mother not knowing the cause for the sickness of her daughter would invite the soothsayers to find out the cause of her sickness. The soothsayers unable to find out the real cause would say that the change was caused by the spirits. The

21. Muruga, l. 182.
22. Madurai, l. 656.
23. Muruga, l. 183.
24. Mullai, ll. 37-38.
25. Kurinji, ll. 30-31.
26. Ibid, ll. 38-39.

mother would then arrange for propitiating the various Gods.[27] The confidante of the maid might then tell the mother, of the real cause and try to arrange for the marriage between the lovers. If the parents having come to know of the real cause of their daughter's sickness, refused to give their consent for the marriage, the maid sometimes eloped with her lover and got married in a distant place.[28] This practice of elopement was recognised in the Tamil society and no attempt seems to have been made by the parents of the maid to separate her from her husband and bring her back. On the other hand the couple were welcomed by the parents of the girl, if they returned some time after their marriage.[29]

The marriage ceremony seems to have been very simple. On the day of the marriage the parents of the maid would extend the palm of the maid to the bridegroom, in the presence of the relatives.[30] This was probably the most important aspect of the marriage ceremony. The house in which the marriage was celebrated seems to have been adorned and made to emit sweet scents around.[31] Even the bride was adorned in a fitting manner for the occasion.[32]

The married couple when they settled down in life, considered it their religious duty to feed their relatives and others. In the Kurinjippaṭṭu a hero exclaims that he would eat food offered by his wife only after they had sumptuously fed others.[33] This kind of family life was sometimes disturbed by the presence of the courtesans who are referred to in the literature as Koṇdi Magaḷir. The Koṇdi Magaḷir are stated to have enticed the menfolk by their beauty and sweet words and to have deserted the menfolk after acquiring what all they possessed, as a bee which flies away after sucking the honey in flower.[34] It is evident from this reference that the hetarae had become a recognised institution in the Tamil country.

27. Ibid, ll. 1-6.
28. Ibid, ll. 20-21.
29. Aham, 195.
30. Kurinji, ll. 231-232.
31. Malaipadu, l. 151.
32. Porunar, l. 1.
33. Kurinji, ll. 202-207.
34. Madurai, ll. 569-573.

Food :

The Pattuppāṭṭu throws much light on the food habits of the people, rich and poor. The people consumed cooked rice,[35] Tiṉai[36] and Varagu.[37] Sometimes rice cooked by adding tamarind was served.[38] In the Perumpāṇārruppadai it is stated that at the threshold of the house, beaten rice was prepared by pounding the paddy, with pestles.[39] It follows that beaten rice should have also been consumed by the people. Meat eating was common. The flesh of the sheep was either roasted[40] in fire or cooked in vessels[41] and consumed. The people were accustomed to eating the flesh of crabs,[42] rabbits,[43] tortoise[44] and udumbu[45] (the big lizard). Fish eating was also common and prawns and other kinds of fish either cooked or roasted in fire were consumed.[46] Even dried fish was much relished.[47] The poor sometimes satisfied their hunger by consuming a plain food consisting of the cooked greens. The Sirupāṇārruppadai refers to the poverty of the minstrels and mentions that the cooked Veḷaikkērai was consumed as food.[48] It is clear from the literature that the people were accustomed to the use of cakes also along with cooked rice and flesh. The Maduraikkāñchi mentions a kind of cake called Mōdagam which contained in it dhal and cocoanut cooked in melted sugar candy.[49] Probably it was a kind of sweet popular with the Tamils. The food seems to have been served on leaves and the Perumpāṇārruppadai mentions the use of the teak leaves for serving food.[50] The Tamils consumed in addition fruits and roots. Plantain fruit,[51], jack fruit[52] and the tender palmyrah[53] were relished. The valli root was

35. Perumpāṇ, l. 474.
36. Ibid, l. 168.
37. Ibid, l. 193.
38. Sirupāṇ, l. 175.
39. Perumpāṇ, l. 226.
40. Porunar, l. 105.
41. Ibid, l. 103.
42. Sirupāṇ, l. 195.
43. Perumpaṇ, l. 115.
44. Paṭṭinam, l. 64.
45. Perumpāṇ, l. 132.
46. Paṭṭinam l. 63.
47. Perumpāṇ, l. 100.
48. Sirupan ll. 136-137.
49. Madurai, l. 626.
50. Perumpān, l. 104.
51. Ibid, l. 359.
52. Ibid, l. 356.
53. Ibid, l. 360.

one of the roots among the eatables.[54] Drinking was very common among the Tamils and the Tamils drank a variety of drinks. Toddy distilled from paddy,[55] palmyrah[56] and honey[57] was a common drink. The toddy was stored in bamboo barrels[58] or in leather containers.[59] The toddy was so intoxicating that it was comparable to snake's poison in its effect on those who drank it.[60] The habit of drinking milk[61] and the tender cocoanut water[62] was also common. The fermented drinks seem to have been taken at day break.[63]

The habit of using betel leaves and areca nut along with lime, which is common at present, was to be seen even among the Tamils of the Sangam Age.[64] It can be said from the above account that the food habits of the ancient Tamils have come down to us without any change in respect of many items of food consumed. The habit of drinking alone is viewed with disfavour at present, whereas it was freely used by almost all classes of people in the Sangam Age.

Dress :

The kind of dress worn by the Tamils is also known from the Pattuppāṭṭu, wherein different terms have been used at different places, to indicate the variety of dress worn by the people. The terms Aṟuvai,[65] Udai,[66] Tugil[67] and Kaliṅgam[68] are applied to indicate the dress of the people. It is not clear whether they were different kinds of garments, or whether they were made of different stuff or material. In the Pattuppāṭṭu at two places the use of silk is mentioned and silk is referred to as Paṭṭādai[69] or Paṭṭu.[70] It follows from this that Aṟuvai, Udai, Tugil and Kaliṅgam were the terms applied to garments other than that made of silk. In all probability

54. Ibid, l. 362.
55. Ibid, l. 142.
56. Paṭṭinam, l. 89.
57. Malaipadu, l. 171.
58. Ibid, ll. 171, 522.
59. Perumpāṉ, l. 382.
60. Siṟupāṉ l. 237.
61. Perumpāṉ, l. 168.
62. Ibid, l. 357.
63. Malaipadu, l. 173.
64. Madurai, ll. 400-401.
65. Porunar, l. 83.
66. Murugā l. 138.
67. Paṭṭiṉam l. 107.
68. Perumpāṉ, l. 469
69. Porunar, l. 155.
70. Perumpāṉ, l. 469.

all these terms were applied to cotton garments, for at no place in the Pattuppāṭṭu there is any reference to the use of woollen garments.

The garments were made of finely woven cloth. The Perumpāṇārruppadai refers to a clothing which was as delicate and transparent as the vapour of the milk.[71] The Porunarārruppadai mentions a fine clothing as fine and designed as that of the slough of the snake.[72] It is stated that it was difficult to trace the course of the yarn as it was so closely woven.[73] The Sirupāṇārruppadai also refers to a fine garment as thin as the slough of the bamboo.[74] The people seem to have used two garments, one to cover the upper portion of the body and the other around the waist. In the Nedunalvādai there is a reference to a garment worn on the left shoulder.[75] It is stated that it was made to rest on the left shoulder by holding it by the left arm. This should have been the aṇgavastram worn even to-day by the menfolk. The Sirupāṇārruppadai and the Malaipadukadām refer to a garment worn round the waist.[76] The Perumpāṇārruppadai and the Sirupāṇārruppadai mention that the kachchu was worn on the breast.[77] It was probably a coat worn to cover the upper portion of the body. The Nedunalvādai refers to a kind of brassiers worn by the ladies.[78] The Tirumurugārruppadai mentions the use of contrasting garments both in shape and colour for the upper and lower portions of the body.[79] In the Pattuppāṭṭu there are references to garments made of leaves, worn around the waist by the ladies.[80] The leaf garment is stated to have been used by the ladies of the Kurinji[81] and littoral regions.[82] The leaf garment was, perhaps a primitive kind of dress which was not given up even during the age of the Sangam by the Kuravar and the Paradavar. The practice of putting starch to the clothing seems to have been known to the Tamils of the age.[83]

71. Ibid, l. 469.
72. Porunar, l. 83.
73. Ibid, l. 82.
74. Sirupāṇ, l. 236.
75. Nedunal, l. 181.
76. Sirupāṇ, l. 262; Malaipadu, l. 562.
77. Perumpāṇ, l. 71.
78. Nedunal, l. 150.
79. Murugā, l. 230.
80. Ibid, ll. 203-204.
81. Ibid, ll. 196-204.
82. Paṭṭinam, ll. 90-91.
83. Madurai, l. 721.

The Tamils were fond of decking themselves in a variety of jewels, and the Pattuppāṭṭu mentions a number of them. The anklet, known as the Silambu[84] or Kiṇkiṇi[85] or Kaḷal,[86] was worn by both men[87] and women.[88]

An ornament with a number of loops of chain was worn round the waist by the ladies and the commentator identifies it with a jewel called Mekhalai.[89] The Kuḷai[90] was worn on the ear. Āram[91] was an ornament which adorned the breast. The use of the bangles, called the Todi was common among both men [92] and women.[93] The Nedunalvādai mentions the use of a ring which resembled in shape the open mouth of the Vāḷai fish and the commentator calls it the Mudakku.[94] Another ornament called Kaivanthi[95] is mentioned. Where exactly it was worn it is not known. It was probably an ornament similar to the Todi and worn on the arm. The ornaments were mostly made of gold and fitted with precious stones.[96]

The ladies took particular care about their coiffure. The Tirumurugāṟṟuppadai mentions different styles in hairdo. The hair was dressed up as to look like the twisted shell[97] or the open mouth of the shark.[98] It was the practice to adorn the tresses with sweet smelling flowers[99] as at present. Both men and women adorned their heads with garlands of flowers called the kaṇṇi.[100] The ladies applied oil,[101] and sweet smelling paste[102] to their tresses and divided the hair into five parts at the back and plaited them.[103] Both the men and women dabbed their breast with sweet smelling paste such as

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84. Perumpāṇ, l. 332.
85. Murugā, l. 13.
86. Ibid, l. 208.
87. Perumpāṇ, l. 102.
88. Muruga, l. 13.
89. Ibid, l. 16.
90. Ibid, l. 86.
91. Ibid, l. 104.
92. Ibid, l. 114.
93. Madurai, l. 446.
94. Nedunal, ll. 143-144.
95. Madurai, l. 415.
96. Kurinji, l. 59.
97. Murugā, l. 33.
98. Ibid, l. 25.
99. Ibid, l. 27.
100. Ibid, ll. 192, 199.
101. Sirupāṇ, l. 14.
102. Kurinji, l. 108.
103. Ibid, l. 139.

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the sandal paste.[104] The ladies drew designs on the breasts in sandal paste and sprinkled on the paste the pollen dust of the Vengai tree and tender leaves. This practice was called the Toyyil Eḻutal.[105] The Maduraikkañchi mentions the sale of the scented powders.[106]. It follows that it was the practice to use even scented powders. In the Perumpāṇārruppadai, a Maravaṉ, or a warrior is described as having a short beard.[107] Perhaps growing beards was a fashion among the menfolk, especially among the warrior class. The ladies used to have a mark called Tilakam,[108] on their forehead.

The dress, the ornaments and decorations of the people described above indicate that the people of the age desired to put on an elegant appearance and that they had a taste for finer things of the world Many of the ornaments and their mode of hairdo and the custom of having Tilakam have come down to us and they also indicate the high level of material culture attained by the people of the Age.

Games and Pastimes :

Some of the games and pastimes of the Tamils are also known from the Pattuppāṭṭu. A number of games played by the girls are mentioned in the anthology. The girls used to erect small fancy structures resembling a small house with sand on the beach and this was called the vaṇdal vilayāṭṭu.[109] They sometimes played with balls, made of twine on the terraces of the houses.[110] Another game that was popular among the girls was playing Kaḻaṅgu[111] and in this play small balls made of gold resembling the dried beans were used by them. A favourite pastime among the girls was sporting in the waters of the sea[112] and in the rivers.[113] While on the beach or on the banks of the rivers they used to catch the crabs and toss them here and there[114] and make small dolls in the sand.[115] When the Vēṅgai tree blossomed the girls would pluck the clusters of flowers crying

104. Murugā, l. 193.
105. Madurai, l. 416.
106. Ibid, l 399.
107. Perumpāṉ, l. 138.
108. Murugā, l. 24.
109. Porunar, l. 187.
110. Perumpāṉ, l. 333.
111. Ibid, l. 335.
112. Paṭṭinam, l. 99.
113. Ibid, l. 100.
114. Ibid, l. 101.
115. Ibid, l. 102.

Puli, Puli,[116] and this cry brought to the place the menfolk and afforded opportunities for the meeting between the two sexes. The children found pleasure in drawing the toy chariots having three wheels.[117]

The people of the Kurinji and Mullai regions, the Kuṟavar and the Kōvalar enjoyed witnessing bull fight in which two humped bulls attacked one another and caused deadly wounds with horns.[118]

Almost all these games and pastimes are to be seen among the Tamils even without the slightest variations. Here we see the past living with the present. Constructing fancy structures is even now common among the children. Playing Kaḻaṅgu is also seen, the only difference being shells or beans taking the place of golden beans.

Customs :

Some of the customs of the Tamils of the Sangam Age are gleaned from the Pattuppāṭṭu. In the Porunarāṟṟuppadai Karikāla is stated to have taken seven steps before giving leave to the minstrels on their journey home[119] The Perumpāṇāṟṟuppadai mentions that the ladies selling salt carried it in carts drawn by bulls.[120] The rich probably employed nurses or foster mothers, who even suckled the babies left under their care.[121] It was the custom for the ladies to sport in the freshes in the rivers, along with their husbands.[122] At sun set the ladies would light the lamps in their houses and worship the god with folded hands, after scattering paddy and flowers[123] in the place of worship. After child birth it was the custom for the ladies to take a bath in the tank along with their relatives, in order to get rid of the pollution of child birth[124] The Paṭṭiṉappālai refers to the custom of employing ladies captured in war in the temples.[125]

The Custom of going some distance along with the departing relatives or guests is even now observed, though the distance so

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116. Madurai, l. 298.
117. Paṭṭiṉam, l. 25.
118. Malaipadu, ll. 330-332.
119. Porunar, l. 166.
120. Perumpāṉ, l. 58.
121. Ibid, ll. 250-251.
122. Madurai, ll. 264-266.
123. Nedunal, ll. 43-44.
124. Madurai, ll. 600-603.
125. Paṭṭiṉam, ll. 246-247.

covered may or may not be seven steps. Again the custom of sporting in the freshes in the river is seen in the festival of Ādip perukku The employment of captured women in the service of the temple and treating them on a special footing, such as allowing them to take their bath in the tank used for drinking purpose only, is similar to the institution of Vestal Virgins among the ancient Romans. It will be far fetched to say that this practice was copied from the Romans with whom the Tamils of the Sangam Age were in contact. It may be that this practice of employing ladies in the service of the temples and allowing them some special privileges, gradually gave rise to the devadasi system which was continued till recent times. Even today the custom of worshipping God either at home or at the temple after the lamps are lighted at sunset, is seen.

Disposal of the Dead:

The dead seem to have been buried and there is no mention about cremation in the Pattuppāṭṭu At the place where the dead were buried upright stones were planted. On the stone the name of the person whose body lay beneath was inscribed.[126] The stone was called Nadukal and the Nadukals of the warriors who fell fighting against the enemy were adorned with the spear and the shield.[127]

Even now there are a number of communities in the Tamil country which do not cremate their dead but only bury them. Small structures such as the Nadukals are erected and the names of the persons interned beneath are recorded.

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126. Malaipadu, l. 388.
127. Paṭṭiṉam ll. 78-79.

IV ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Occupations:

In the five natural regions of the land there were the Kuravar, Kōvalar, Uḷavar, Paradavar and the Eyinar. In addition to these there were other occupational groups which were to be seen in all the regions of the land. They could be more appropriately called craftsmen, or artisans and distinguished from the main occupational groups.

The potter is mentioned in the Malaipadukadām, and the potter must have been one of the important craftsmen.[1] The potter used the wheel in making pottery and it follows from this that pottery should have been well shaped and not crude. The blacksmith or the Kollan was perhaps another indispensable craftsman. The Kollan used the bellows to keep the furnace hot and burning.[2] The strong, shining spears used by the warriors should have been wrought by the blacksmith in his workshop which filled the neighbourhood with the noise of hammering the iron.[3] The goldsmith was also another artisan whose services should have been in great demand in view of the variety of ornaments required to satisfy the finer tastes of both the sexes. The goldsmith even wrought dolls, or images[4] and was one of the skilled artisans of the age. The Tamils used not only gold bangles but also bangles made of shell. There were artisans who neatly cut bangles out of shells.[5] The carpenter was another artisan whose services were

1. Malaipadu, l. 474.
2. Perumpāṇ, ll. 206-207.
3. Ibid, l. 437.
4. Madurai, ll. 410, 512.
5. Ibid, l. 511.

required for making chariots, boats and ships and he is stated to have used the tusks of elephants in making the chariots.[6] Beads were made out of wood.[7] There were others who were engaged in less skilled occupations. Some drilled holes in precious articles such as the pearl and the coral.[8] The time was calculated by some with the help of the water clock. They were known as the Naḻigai Kaṇṇakkar.[9] The elephants, were tamed and trained by some who used the Vadamoḻi, or the language of the north[10] in giving command to the beasts.

Among the industries that were in existence the sugar and salt industries are mentioned in the Pattuppāṭṭu. The Maduraikkāñch mentions the manufacture of salt in salt pans,[11] along the beach. The sugarcane was pressed in machines and the brown sugar was manufactured by boiling the juice in frying pans.[12] The people also knew the process of making sugar-candy.[13]

HOUSES:

The houses of the people were small or large according to their wealth. The poor such as the Kuravar lived in huts and the huts had thatched roofs, strewn with either hay,[14] dried palm leaves,[15] or grass.[16] At the threshold of the huts, there were to be seen hounds,[17] and fowls which were provided with nests resembling the shed, the Kuravar set up on trees to drive the elephants.[18]

That the rich lived in large, tall storied houses, is inferred from the description that their houses were so high as to touch the sky.[19] The Paṭṭiṉappālai refers to the use of wooden staircases to reach the floors above the ground floor.[20] These houses were built of brick[21]

6. Porunar, l. 163.
7. Siṟupāṉ, l. 52.
8. Madurai, l. 511.
9. Mullai, l. 58.
10. Ibid, ll. 35-36; Malaipadu, l. 327.
11. Madurai, l. 117.
12. Perumpāṉ, ll 260-261.
13. Madurai, l. 625.
14. Perumpāṉ, l. 225.
15. Ibid, l. 353.
16. Malaipadu, l. 439.
17. Perumpāṉ, l. 125.
18. Ibid, ll 51-52.
19. Ibid, ll. 332-333.
20. Paṭṭiṉam, l. 142.
21. Perumpāṉ, l. 405.

and plastered with mortar.[22] These buildings seem to have been solid structures, for in Nedunalvādai it is stated that they looked like structures made of copper.[23] The roofs of these houses were supported by strong pillars[24] and there were windows[25] and balconies.

The rulers of the Tamil country lived in palaces. The palaces of the kings are referred to as Kōyils.[27] The Paṭṭiṉappālai refers to the king's palace as veṉkōyil.[28] The palaces were adorned with a variety of paintings.[29] The Mullaippāṭṭu mentions that the king's palace had seven stories.[30] The palace was surrounded by high walls[31] having high entrances,[32] as to enable an elephant, on whose back the victorious banner has been raised, to enter freely without any obstruction[33] The gates in the surrounding wall were fitted with twin doors.[34] The Nedunalvādai, which contains a description of the bed room in the palace of Nedum Seḻiyaṉ, mentions lamps made by the yavanās in the shape of maiden having in their palms a hollowed vessel.[35] The bed room was furnished with cots designed by skilled carpenters out of ivory. Strings of pearls adorned the cot on all the four sides.[36] Fine feathers of the swans were used in mattresses[37] The people of the Palai region, the Eyiṉar are stated to have used the deer skin for their bed.[38]

In the Perumpāṇāṟṟuppadai there is a description of the house of the Brahmanas.[39] In the threshold of their houses were to be seen fleshy calves tied to the stems supporting the roof of their thatched huts. The dogs and the fowls seen at the houses of the Eyiṉar and others could not be seen at the houses of the Brahmanas.

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22. Nedunal, l. 110.
23. Ibid, l. 112.
24. Ibid, l. 111.
25. Madurai, l. 358.
26. Paṭṭiṉam, l. 151.
27. Porunar, l. 90.
28. Paṭṭiṉam, l. 50.
29. Ibid, l. 49.
30. Mullai, l. 85.
31. Madurai, l. 66.
32. Porunar, l. 66.
33. Nedunal, l. 87.
34. Ibid, l. 81.
35. Ibid, ll. 101-102.
36. Ibid, l. 125.
37. Ibid, ll. 132-133.
38. Perumpāṇ, l. 89; Madurai, l. 310.
39. Ibid, ll. 297-298.

The streets were broad and flanked on both sides by houses.[40] Different kinds of flags were to be seen on top of the houses. The sale of toddy for instance was indicated by a kind of flag raised on top of the toddy shop[41] The streets were patrolled by a body of men mentioned as ūrkāppāḷar during nights.[42]

TRADE:

The people of the land carried on brisk internal as well as foreign trade. The articles of the different regions of the land were exchanged. The people of the Kurinji region are stated to have exchanged honey and root, for fish oil and toddy, brought by the Paradavar.[43] The people of the Marudam and Kurinji regions exchanged sugar-cane and beaten rice for venison and toddy.[44] It follows that trade was by barter.

The traders transported their goods from one region to another. The Umaṇar or the salt vendors should have traversed all the regions, as salt was an article used by all in daily life. The Umaṇar used bullock carts in transporting salt[45] and pepper was transported on the back of mules by the traders.[46] The Maduraikkāñji refers to traders who dealt in foreign articles which they exchanged for precious stones, pearls and gold.[47] Gold merchants who tested the fineness of the gold in the assay stone[48] and the cloth merchants[49] are referred to in the same work.

An account of the imports and exports of the country is gleaned from the collection. In the Perumpāṇārruppadai it is stated that the ships brought to the Tamil Country white horses and things of the north.[50] The Maduraikkāñji, mentions some of the articles exported by the Tamils. The yavanās who arrived at the ports loaded their ships with the articles of the Tamil country such as, pearls, bangles made of shell, grain, salt, tamarind and dried fish[51], got in return for

40. Madurai, l. 359.
41. Ibid, l. 372.
42. Ibid, ll. 643-647.
43. Porunar, ll. 214-215.
44. Ibid, ll. 216-217.
45. Sirupāṇ, l. 55; Perumpāṇ, l. 65.
46. Perumpāṇ, l. 81.
47. Madurai, ll. 505-506.
48 Ibid, l. 513.
49. Ibid, l. 513.
50. Perumpāṇ, ll. 319-321.
51. Madurai, ll. 315-321.

horses[52] In Puhār, the foreigners lived in harmony with the Tamils.[53] Puhār abounded in a variety of articles, such as the horse, that was brought on the sea, pepper transported on land, precious stones and gold obtained from the northern mountains, sandalwood and aloe secured from the western Ghats, pearls of the southern sea, corals of the eastern sea, and articles of the Ganges and Kavēri delta regions and goods from Iḻam (Ceylon) and Kaḻāgam (Kadāram).[54] Puhār should have been an emporia of the east.

The Tamils should have used ships for the purpose of securing the articles of Iḻam and Kadāram and this implies that they should have made considerable advance in the art of ship building. The terms Nāvāi[55] and Vaṅgam[56] are used to denote the ships which were used to export and import. These ships were not rowed by oarsmen: there were sails tied to the masts of the ships and the ships could sail only when there was strong wind. Lights were lit in the nights on top of flat roofed buildings to help the vessels which had deviated from its course of voyage to know the right direction. These towers were the ancient light houses of the Tamil country.

At the port cities, the royal officials were always busy collecting customs duties.[57] At Puhār the traders could load the articles in the ships only after paying customs duties. The royal officials imprinted the tiger emblem on the articles to distinguish them from the articles on which the customs duties had to be collected.[58] It should be noted in this connection that the customs duties were levied on the exports and not on imports. This would imply that the Tamil country exported many more articles than it imported and the export duties levied on goods should have been a rich source of revenue for the state.

The general economic condition of the Tamil country is portrayed by the poets in broad sweeps of their pen. In the Paṇdya country crops grew so high as to make the sight of an elephant which had entered the field invisible.[59] It only indicates the prosperity of the country. In the Paṭṭinappālai the poet states that

52. Ibid, ll. 322-323.
53. Paṭṭinam, ll. 216-217.
54. Ibid, ll. 185-191.
55. Madurai, l. 83.
56. Ibid, l. 56.
57. Paṭṭinam, ll. 120-125.
58. Ibid, ll. 134-135.
59. Madurai, l. 247.

bright faced maiden with pleasant looks, flung their heavy gold ear-rings to scare away the fowls that peck at the corn spread at the threshold of the house.[60] The description of the poet is an indication of the wealth of the Chōḻa country.

In the Pattuppāṭṭu there is no indication to show that the Tamils knew the use of the currency. But in the Ahanānūṟu, there are references to show that the Tamils of the age used gold coins[61] and another currency called Paḻiṅgukkāsu.[62] Even in the Pattuppāṭṭu the term kāsu[63] is used in one place. But the commentator takes it to mean precious stones. In view of the mention of gold coins and Paḻiṅgukkāsu in the Ahanānūṟu it may be taken that trade was not exclusively by barter and that the Tamils had their own currency the use of which was probably restricted to commercial centres and capitals.

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60. Paṭṭiṉam, ll. 20-25.
61. Aham, 363, 293.
62. Ibid, 314.
63. Murugā, l. 16.

V. RELIGION

It is in the sphere of religion that the influence of the north is distinct. The Tamils of the Sangam age worshipped a number of deities. The most popular god was Murugā. In the Tirumurugāṟṟuppadai there is a detailed account of His birth, characteristics and exploits. Murugā is described as the son of the Lord who sits under the banyan tree (Siva);[1] as the son of Malai Magaḷ[2] (Parvati); as Koṟṟavai's son,[3] and as the son of Paḻaiyōḷ.[4] Murugā is identified with Āṟumugan̲ or Shaṇmugan̲ by the poet who states that six children were born to six (divine) mothers on the Himalayas, in a small tank and they became Āṟumugan̲.[5] Murugā is referred to as the ominicient Lord,[6] and as the husband of Vaḷḷi[7] and Deivayān̲ai.[8] He wore a garland of Kadambu flowers[9] and rode on elephant.[10] Murugā was eminently a God of war known for his prowess.[11] His banner contined the figure of either the Cock[12], or the Pea-cock.[13] Murugā was the leader of the Devas[14] and He entered the sea and killed Sūrapan̲man̲,

1. Murugā, i. 256.
2. Ibid. 1. 257.
3. Ibid. 1. 258.
4. Ibid. 1. 259.
5. Ibid. ll. 253-255.
6. Ibid. l. 261.
7. Ibid. l. 103.
8. l. 264.
9. Ibid. ll. 10-11.
10. Ibid. l. 82.
11. Porunar, l. 131.
12. Murugā, l. 38.
13. Ibid. l. 122.
14. Ibid. l. 260.

who in form was animal and man combined in one[15]. He also cut off the mango tree which represented the might of the Asuras.[16] Another military exploit of Murugā mentioned in the work is His destruction of the mount named after a bird.[71] The account relating to the birth of Murugā and the reference to Him as the son of Koṟṟavai and Paḻayōḷ unmistakably indicate the mixing up of northern and southern religious beliefs. It should also be noted that the pea-cock which is believed to be His mount at present was only the emblem in His banner and that the elephant was His mount.

Lord Siva, was conceived of as the father of Murugā, as the creator of the universe and as the one who wielded the battle axe.[18] He is described as the Lord who has in him goodess Umā and as the one with an unwinking eye. He is stated to have destroyed three flying fortresses[19] and to have consumed the poison which made the world shudder[20] The Paṭṭiṉappālai mentions the worship of an upright stone set up in a public place.[21] The worship of the stone perhaps implies the worship of Siva in the form of lingā, as at present. The stones resembling the lingā discovered in the Indus valley, have shown that lingā worship was a pre-Aryan practice. The reference to such a pre-Aryan practice in the Pattuppāṭṭu would indicate that the religion of the Tamil country was also non-Aryan in origin and that by the time of the Sangam Age, the influence of the Aryan North came to be felt in the sphere of religion. Siva's banner is stated to contain the figure of a white bull.

Tirumāl[23] is described as the dark (blue) complexioned God[24] His banner is said to contain the figure of the vulture (Garuda)[25]. His breast is adorned by Tirumagaḷ[26]. He is stated to have slept on a snake bed[27]. The Mullaippāṭṭu refers to the story of Māvali and states that Tirumāl rose in stature the moment Māvali allowed water to flow from his

15. Ibid. ll. 45-46, ll. 57-58.
16. Ibid. ll. 59-60.
17. Ibid. l. 266.
18. Mullai, ll. 453-455.
19. Murugā, ll. 153-154.
20. Malaipadu, ll. 81-83.
21. Paṭṭiṉam, ll 248-249.
22. Murugā, ll. 151-152.
23. Mullai, l. 3.
24. Perumpāṇ, l.402.
25. Murugā, l. 151.
26. Perumpāṇ, l. 29.
27. Ibid l 373

hand.[28] Tirumāl is stated to have been born on the day of the star Tiruvōṇam.[29]

Indra is described as the one whose body looked as though it was made up of thousand eyes, and as the one who received the power to destroy His enemies in war, by performing hundred sacrifices. His mount is the four tusked elephant.[30] Brahma, the God with four heads is stated to have been born in the lotus which sprouted from the navel of Tirumāl[31] The Sun God is also mentioned and he is said to travel across the sky in a chariot drawn by seven steeds.[32] The earth is conceived of as a goddess.[33] The shining star which appears in the direction of the north is identified with the goddess of chasity, Arundathi.[34]

The Gods and Goddesses were worshipped by folding the fore arms and clasping the palms together.[35] In the Tirumurgārruppadai it is seen that the deities were worshipped by prostrating also[36]. It follows from this that the deities were worshipped by installing images before which the people prostrated. The Nedunalvādai states that the womenfolk lighted the lamps at sunset and worshipped the Gods, by scattering paddy and flower at the place of worship[37] The practice of worshipping the Gods at senset is seen even today and it should have been of the ancient religious practices of the Tamils. At another place in the Nedunalvādai it is stated that the carpenters worshipped the Gods before commencing the construction of a palace.[38] It follows that all important activities were begun after praying to the Gods.

The Tirumurgārruppadai gives a detailed description of the worship of Murugā by a Kuṟamagaḷ It is stated in it that she tied to her hand a red thread, spread around fried rice, and rice mixed with the blood of fatted ram. She also sprinkled the place of worship with turmeric and sandalwood paste. The place was adorned with garlands, and incense was burnt. She then sang the Kurinji tune accompanied by the sound of musical instruments and offerred worship

28. Mullai, l. 3.
29. Madurai, l. 591.
30. Murugā, ll. 155-159.
31. Perumpāṇ, l.402 Murugā, ll.164-165.
32. Kurinji, ll. 215-216.
33. Siṟupāṇ, l. 1.
34. Perumpān, ll. 302-303.
35. Paṭṭiṇam, l. 154.
36. Murugā, l. 252.
37. Nedunal, ll. 41-43.
38. Ibid, ll. 76-77.

sprinkling tiṉai mixed with blood and flowers.[39] It is evident from this account that the worship of Murugā included the sacrifice of animals. In the same work there is a description of the way in which the Brahmanas worshipped Murugā They clothed themselves in wet garments, raised the hands above the head together and worshipped Murugā by muttering the six letters which represent the lord and by sprinkling flowers.[40] It should be noted that the Brahmanas did not make animal sacrifices in worshipping Murugā. The Perumpāṇārruppadai mentions the performance of Vedic sacrifices, by the Brahmanas.[41] In the same work it is stated that the ascetics used the twigs brought by the elephants in their sacrifices.[42] In the Paṭṭiṉappālai it is stated that sweet smelling smoke rose from the place of vedic sacrifice.[43] These references to the Vedic sacrifices make it clear that they did not include the killing of animals.

There are clear indications in the Maduraikkāñchi to the presence of Buddhists and Jains in the Tamil country. In the Buddhist place of worship called the Paḷḷi, womenfolk are stated to have offered flowers and burnt incense.[44] Likewise the Jains are also stated to have worshipped by offering flowers and burning incense.[45] The Jain vihārās are stated to have contained paintings on the walls.[46] In the Tirumurugārruppadai a Kuramakaḷ is stated to have worshipped Murugā in such a way as to make those who had no belief in the existence of God shudder.[47] The disbelievers mentioned at this place should have been the Buddhists and Jains who did not recognise the existence of God. Though there is no reference to any religious conflict between the Buddhists and Jains on the one hand and the rest of the people on the other, it is evident from the reference to Kuramakaḷ's worship of Murugā that the followers of Hinduism did not view with favour Jainism and Buddhism.

In the Tamil country festivals were conducted in honour of the deities.[48] During such festivals the people from the neighbourhood would throng the place where the festivals were conducted. It was the

39. Murugā, ll. 231-244.
40. Ibid, ll. 184-188.
41. Perumpāṇ, ii. 315-316.
42. Ibid. ll. 498-499.
43. Paṭṭiṉam, ll. 54-55.
44. Madurai, ll. 466-467.
45. Ibid. ll. 475-476.
46. Ibid. l. 485.
47. Murugā, ll. 243-244.
48. Paṭṭiṉam, l. 255.

practice of the Tamils to feed those who had come to witness the festival.[49] During such festivals the people seem to have been entertained by the acrobats. In the Kurinjippāṭṭu there is a reference to the rope dance performed by the Ādumakaḷ.[50] One of the festivals mentioned in the Pattuppāṭṭu is the ōnam festival held in honour of Tirumāl.[51]

The Tamils were superstitious and believed in omens. It was the practice, to listen to good omens before starting for war.[52] In the Mullaippāṭṭu elderly women who wanted to know whether the hero would return home wait at the outskirts of the town for omen and when they heard the Āymagaḷ say that the cows would return home, they took it as a good omen indicating that the hero would return home.[53] This indicates that an affirmative declaration was taken as a good omen. The Tamils believed that the deities resided on the Himalaya Mountain.[54] They had belief in the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul and the doctrine of Karma. A lady love exclaims that even if her parents refuse to give her in marriage to the hero, she would remain calm and consoled as she was sure of marrying the hero in the next birth.[55] In the Porunarāṟṟuppadai a bard who had met Karikāla and was returning with reward meets on the way another bard and exclaims that the good deeds he had performed in the previous birth had only brought about the meeting with him and that the meeting would lead to his prosperity.[56] Herein there is a clear indication of the belief in the doctrine of Karma. The Tamils believed in the existence of Swargā or heaven which could not be attained easily by an one.[57] It was thought by the Tamils that the earth was held aloft by divine elephants.[58] A bath in the sea was thought to absolve one from all sins.[59] The Tamils seem to have thought that the Sun and the Moon moved round the earth.[60]

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49. Kurinji, ll. 201-202.
50. Ibid, ll. 193-194.
51. Madurai, ll. 475-476.
52. Mullai, ll. 18-19.
53. Ibid, ll. 7-17.
54. Siṟupāṉ, l. 205.
55. Kurinji, l. 24.
56. Porunar, l. 59.
57. Paṭṭiṉam, l. 104.
58. Madurai, l. 15.
59. Paṭṭiṉam, l. 99.
60. Perumpāṉ, l. 17.

VI. CULTURE

Literature :

The Age of the Sangam witnessed a rich crop of literature. The voluminous literature of the period itself speaks of the high rate of literacy and the literary attainments of the people. The poets could not have produced such a large number of works, if there was no encouragement and patronage. The kings and chieftains loved learning and patronised the bards. Among those who appear as the authors of the different pieces of the Pattuppāṭṭu, Nappūdaṉār came from the merchant class and another Mudattāma Kaṇṇiyār came from the fairer sex. It follows from this that the poets were drawn from different walks of life and from both sexes of the people.

The Tamils seem to have been well acquainted with the Puranic stories. Bhimā, one among the Paṇdavās was believed to have produced a work on the preparation of different kinds of food.[1] The story of the moon being devoured by the snake is mentioned at two places in the Pattuppāṭṭu. The Bharata war between the Pāṇdavās and the Kauravas in which all the hundred brothers were killed by the Pāṇdavās was also known to the Tamils.[3] The Tamils had a knowledge of a work on horses[4] and a work on music.[5]

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1. Sirupāṇ, ll. 240-241.
2. Ibid, l. 185; Perumpāṇ, ll. 383-384.
3. Perumpaṇ, ll. 415-417.
4. Ibid, ll. 487-488.
5. Sirupāṇ, l. 230.

Music and Dance :

Music and dance played a prominent part in the life of the Tamils. The people enjoyed singing tunes, playing on musical instruments, and dancing in public places. Worship of Murugā included singing by ladies[6] The Tamils were capable of singing a number of tunes and among them the Kurinji,[7] Marudam[8] and Pālai[9] tunes seem to have been popular with them. The ladies used to sing while pounding tinai or paddy, and this was called the Vallaippāṭṭu.[10] Among the musical instrument, the yāḻ was the most common instrument. There were different kinds of Yāḻs, big and small, called the Pēriyāḻ[11] and Sīriyāḻ.[12] The Porunarārruppadai mentions a kind of yaḻ called Pāḻāiyāḻ. It is stated that the sound of the Pālaiyāḻ would make the highwaymen drop their weapons and forget committing robbery[13] The yāḻ was a stringed instrument[14] and was held on the left side.[15] The flute or the kuḻal was the wind instrument used mostly by the Kōvalar.[16] In addition to playing on these string and wind instruments, the Tamils played on a variety of percussion instruments such as the muḻavu[17] and Āguḷi.[18] A metallic instrument called Pāndil[19] is mentioned. Perhaps it was similar to the Cymbals used in the present day. Another wind instrument called the Tūmbu is mentioned and its sound is compared to the heavy sigh of an elephant.[20]

Different kinds of dances are mentioned such as the Kuravai, Thuṇaṅgai and Vaḷḷi Both men and women performed the Kuravai dance, to the accompaniment of the sound of the sweet drum.[21] It was performed by embracing and clasping the hands of one another.[22] The Thuṇaṅgai dance seems to have been performed during festi-

6. Murugā, l. 212.
7. Ibid, l. 239.
8. 'Malaipadu, l. 534.
9. Perumpāṇ, l. 180.
10. Malaipadu, l. 342.
11. Perumpān, l. 462.
12. Nedunal, l. 70.
13. Porunar, ll. 21-22.
14. Malaipadu, l. 535.
15. Perumpāṇ, ll. 15-16.
16. Ibid, l. 179.
17. Malaipadu, l. 3.
18. Ibid, l. 3.
19. Ibid, l. 4.
20. Ibid, l. 6.
21. Ibid, ll. 320-322.
22. Murugā, ll. 215-216; Madurai, l. 614.

vals.[23] It is also referred to as the dance performed by the spirits on the battle field.[24] It was performed by shaking the shoulders,[25] and it was perhaps a frenzied dance in which the participants forgot themselves. The Perumpāṉaṟṟuppadai mentions the performance of the Vaḷḷi dance by the people of a prosperous region where the people did not suffer from disease or poverty.[26]

The Pāṇar played on the yāḻ.[27]. The terms Kōdiyar[28] or Vayiriyar[29] are used to denote the dancers. The womenfolk among the dancers are called the Viṟaliyar.[30] They gave performance during festivals.[31] The dance was performed to the accompaniment of the sound of the Muḻavu or the sweet drum, and the yāḻ or the lute.[32] The pāṇan and the Kōdiyar were known for their extreme poverty.[33]

The bards and the minstrels were patronised by the kings and the chieftains. They were presented with elephants, and ornaments.[34] The chief among the minstrels was presented with a golden lotus.[35] The kings and chieftains had much regard for them. Adigaṉ gave away the rare myrobalan fruit to Auvai.[36] They were presented with even chariots and horses[37] and relieved of their life-long poverty.[38]

The above account would show that the Kōdiyar were professional dancers who wandered throughout the country giving music and dance performances to earn their livilihood. The use of a variety of musical instruments also implies the importance given to instrumental music in those days. On the whole the appreciation of music and dance reveals the aesthetic sense of the people and their finer taste.

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23. Madurai, ll. 328-329.
24. Murugā, l. 56.
25. Ibid, l. 55.
26. Perumpāṇ, l 370.
27. Malaipadu. ll. 35-40.
28. Sirupāṇ, l. 109.
29. Madurai, l. 628.
30. Porunar, l. 110.
31. Madurai, l. 628.
32. Paṭṭinam, ll. 253-254.
33. Perumpāṇ, ll 21-22.
34. Madurai, ll. 102-104.
35. Malaipadu, l. 569.
36. Sirupāṇ, ll 100-103.
37. Madurai, ll. 223-224.
38. Porunar, ll. 61-62.

Painting and Sculpture :

It is clear from the Pattuppāṭṭu that the Tamils knew the art of painting and extensively used it both for adorning the palaces[39] and the. vihāras[40] ot the Jains. They used colours[41] and it is stated that floral designs[42] were painted on the walls of the palace of Nedum Seḻiyaṉ. That the Tamils also knew the art of sculpture is evident from the reference to images made of gold[43] in the Maduraikkāñchi and from the Tirumurugāṟṟuppadai, wherein people are stated to have prostrated as to place their head at the feet of God.[44]

Conclusion :

The culture of the Tamils appears to have been a simple, unsophisticated one, at the sametime combining in itself the material comforts of a sophisticated life The picture that the Pattuppāṭṭu presents is that of a mixed culture. Yet the predomination of the non-Aryan element in the life of the Tamils of this age is clear.

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39. Paṭṭiṉam ll. 49-50.
41. Nedunal, l. 147.
44. Muruga, l. 252.
43. Madurai l. 410.
42. Ibid, l. 113.

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